

Sustainable Strathaven - A Manifesto

*In the wake of a declared climate emergency and an unsustainable rate of consumption of our one planet's resources, **Climate Action Strathaven (CAS)** was established as a charity in 2020 with the following aims:-*

- The advancement of citizenship and community development;*
 - The advancement of environmental protection and improvement.*
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This Manifesto sets out our ambitions towards Strathaven becoming a leader in environmental sustainability. We want to work together with individuals and community groups to deliver ambitious targets which better reflect the urgency of the climate emergency than those adopted by Governments. To these ends, we intend to work with a range of stakeholders to design and deliver:-

- **Influence**, through agreeing specific requests and expectations of politicians at both local and national level to promote, in the short term, a green recovery from the disruption of coronavirus and, in the longer term, more ambitious progress against environmental damage;
 - **Local Action**, including finding ways to access resources to improve the energy efficiency of local housing, supporting local businesses based on the principles of a circular economy and encouraging local initiatives, including reducing and recycling waste;
 - **Sustainable Travel and Transport**, through finding ways to make safer walking and cycling options easier than using cars and better public transport for commuting to school and work; we will also explore the development of a Strathaven Car Club to address the proliferation of cars and offer better and cheaper options for getting around.
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All of this will be pursued in ways which aim to enrich the lives of Strathaven residents and local businesses, not to constrain them.

As a small Charity, **CAS** does not have the expertise nor the capacity to deliver these ambitions on our own. What we do recognise is the power of relationships. We want to engage with a wider range of people and organisations (some of whom will already be active) willing to become partners in championing and delivering the innovations required to sustain Strathaven into a thriving long term future and to provide a model for other communities across Scotland.

Our Ambitions for Strathaven (ML10 postcode area)

- **Targeting Net Zero** - Achievement of carbon neutrality within Strathaven;
- **Promoting COVID Green Economic Recovery** - Provide support to the local economy, in efforts to recover from the impact of COVID-19 in ways which are both environmentally sustainable and commercially viable;
- **Promoting Local Green Economy** - Provide support to local businesses, based on the principles of a circular economy, to enable transition towards sustainable growth/outcomes;
- **Improving safe and healthy travel** - Support improvements in public transport, a reduction in accidents and improve perceptions of safety, for non-motorised users;
- **Enhancement of place, health and wellbeing** - Provide support to enhance the overall 'sense of place', physical and mental health and wellbeing of local residents;

What we plan to do to achieve this

Our first task was to distil a shortlist of deliverable actions from the many ideas and suggestions worthy of consideration! The following Action Plan, with our 'top ten' projects will be further developed in consultation with as many people as want to be involved, through online channels, survey through The Strathaven Echoes and with assistance from other community groups.

It is also important to identify 'champions' for each project, some of whom may already be actively pursuing these aims, and for each of these leaders to want to work with us, to be able to report regularly to CAS on progress for any appropriate support which we are able to give.

Our Action Plan

Influencing Policy

It is really important to be able to ensure that local and national policies reflect the needs and ambitions of local communities such as Strathaven, which is, after all, where people live their lives and is where most of the action will be delivered!

The next step will be to make clear our specific requests and expectations of politicians at both local and national level to promote, in the short term, a green recovery from the disruption of coronavirus and, in the longer term, more ambitious progress against environmental damage. This will involve directing constructive challenges to local and national politicians and business leaders to increase their commitment to real and early action. These challenges will be relevant to the areas for action in our 'top ten' below, listed in no particular priority order:-

Local Action

1. Establish a Strathaven Food Growers Scheme:-
 - establish a community growing space and composting facilities;
 - campaign for allotments within Strathaven – there are currently 12 in Sandford, but none in Strathaven;
 - organise workshops on growing, cooking and composting;
 - support people to reduce carbon footprints in the areas of waste and food;
 - hire a couple of gardeners who could spend an hour at up to 40 different houses weekly from early spring 2021 to help folk grow food in their gardens.
2. Encourage Schools Initiatives
 - work in conjunction with interested schools to promote local food production and to develop e.g. 'egg enterprises', mini orchards and vegetable gardens;
 - support pupils to 'grow their own future' and become more aware of food use and waste and how we can reduce our carbon footprint;
 - encourage schools to designate Climate Change Champions from within their student populations;
 - organise a competition for students to develop a logo for CAS, thereby increasing their awareness of the issues and the existence of community endeavours in this area.
3. Investigate the creation of 'shared working' spaces within Strathaven to reduce isolation, offer potential efficiencies whilst at the same time reducing car use and long distance commuting traffic.
4. Improve the quality of homes, including better insulation, reduced fuel costs and addressing fuel poverty, which can affect up to 20% of homes:-
 - deliver a thermal image project over the winter, taking thermal images of the outside of participant's houses, providing them with brief points on where they are losing heat. Hold a display & feedback session at the Town Mill;

- support local contractors develop the skills necessary to deliver 'energy deep-retrofit' on local houses, saving up to 80-90% on heating costs.
5. Help the people of Strathaven to learn more about climate change:-
- produce a guide (1 page/bullet points) to low carbon living and a circular economy and distribute throughout the area; while most people know about climate change in general terms, explaining ideas about practical ways of engaging and taking action within the household keeps the issue real and is something we can all look at again and again;
 - produce a slightly more detailed guide about heating, with clear information on both costs and benefits of green technology (solar and thermal)
 - run open meetings/Zoom sessions and communicate about what CAS is doing through website, social media and the Strathaven Echoes
 - recognise the importance of everybody taking action now, to safeguard a sustainable future for our children and grandchildren;

Sustainable Travel and Transport

6. Establish Strathaven Cycle and General Repair Shop at the Town Mill, building on the success of the summer 2020 series of pop-up cycle repair shops, to contribute to the development of a local circular economy, improve health and wellbeing and reduce car use:-
- 'how to do' workshops.....changing tyres, other repairs;
 - a cycle fun/fundraising event in Strathaven Park;
 - home energy advice workshop.
7. Support local businesses to adopt low carbon vehicles (electric/hydrogen/hybrid/cargo bikes) for deliveries and business within and around Strathaven:-
- pursue grants for e-bikes and cargo e-bike;
 - explore introduction of local hydrogen fuel source, to encourage use of the full range of environmentally-friendly vehicles;
 - campaign for further low carbon charging infrastructure at key locations within Strathaven, including electric charge stations / hydrogen fuel stations.
8. Campaign with South Lanarkshire Council and Sustrans to develop the area in ways which encourage active travel, providing safe routes for exercise and helping to reduce car journeys:-
- Cut speed limits - at present all the roads that feed into the town are national speed limit/60mph (A726, All the back roads between EK through Auldhouse to Strathaven, the A71, all the backroads from the west and south in to Strathaven etc). This makes it dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists. The town itself could become a 20mph limit and the limit enforced to slow down both cars and trucks passing through;
 - critically review safety and convenience for journeys to and from Strathaven Academy and Primary Schools within the area;

- provide infrastructure (cycle stands / lockers etc) at key locations (schools / supermarkets/Town Centre) to remove barriers to active travel;
 - develop active travel routes (segregated) on key routes through Strathaven, serving new developments, including A723 / Glassford Road (to Fleming Boulevard) and A723 Townhead Street / A71 (to Healds Drive);
 - reallocate road space within The Common Green to enhance public realm and pedestrian linkages;
 - improve pedestrian and cycle linkages between Strathaven and surrounding smaller villages (Sandford, Gilmourton, Caldermill, Drumclog, Dungavel, Chapelton and Glassford) and between Town Centre and Strathaven Park;
 - produce an up-to-date walking/cycling map for the Strathaven area, possibly in conjunction with the Academy and local walking/ cycling groups
9. Campaign with SPT and bus operators to improve convenient public transport options:-
- support local public transport operators in the enhancement of low carbon demand responsive transport DRT i.e. Dial a Bus, primarily for disadvantaged (economically / geographically) and elderly communities;
 - campaign to improve strategic active travel links to rail stations (Larkhall, Hamilton, East Kilbride), potentially utilising disused rail lines;
 - explore viability of a regular commuter bus to Glasgow e.g. save and extend X1 to/from Strathaven at rush hours;
 - explore options to develop a local shuttle bus.
10. Explore, with CoMoUK, the viability of establishing a Strathaven Car Club with the potential to significantly reduce the burden of car ownership.

Resources

This Manifesto and its Action Plan will be delivered with the support and energy of the whole community, together with expertise and financial resources won through campaigning and successful grant applications for specific projects.

Timescales

Time is of the essence if we want to secure a sustainable future for our community and contribute to the global challenge. The programme of work outlined in the 'top ten' in this Action Plan will be pursued as actively as is possible considering the voluntary nature of the Charity and its supporters.

www.CAStrathaven.org